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SUBJECT: SYG SELECTION: FEBRUARY 24 P-5 CONSULTATIONS
REF: STATE 30367

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Bolton, Permanent Representative, for
reasons 1.4 b,d.

¶1. (C) Summary. The Permanent Representatives of the P-5 met Friday, February 24 to continue their private consultations on the selection of the next Secretary General (SYG). They agreed it was useful that the full membership of the Council was already engaged in informal discussions on the subject and that the Council should maintain momentum under future Presidencies. The PRs agreed to suggest ideas for bilateral consultations on the SYG selection to Argentine Ambassador Mayoral (the Council President in March) and to encourage him to hold an informal session in the Council during his Presidency. There was agreement that a new SYG should be elected, in the GA upon the recommendation of the Council, no later than September or October. They opposed the idea of electing a "ticket" of SYG and D/SYG, and noted that the Council would have to ensure that efforts to engage the General Assembly in the process did not deviate from the Charter or undermine the prerogatives of the Council. Ambassador Bolton emphasized the importance of a process that generated a sufficient pool of candidates and allowed the P-5 to come to agreement prior to voting in the Council. End Summary.

¶2. (C) P-5 Permanent Representatives (PRs) met February 24 to continue their discussion on the SYG selection process, following the full Security Council's "informal informals" on the same subject earlier in the morning. French PR de La Sabliere opened the discussion by noting that the U.S. Presidency's efforts to conduct consultations on the issue and involve the full membership of the Council "gave everyone a sense of ownership" and was of "fundamental importance" in the current atmosphere of distrust between the General Assembly (GA) and the UNSC. "If we want the Charter respected," he said, "then we must have the process on track in the Council."

¶3. (U) De La Sabliere proposed three topics for discussion: the timing of the selection; the idea of selecting a SYG and D/SYG together; and the appropriate role for the GA.

Timing

¶4. (C) The PRs of France, Russia, China and the UK all expressed support for finishing the selection process (GA action on a UNSC recommendation) by late September or October. De La Sabliere noted it would be impossible to know how long the process would take, but suggested that "June or July" would be an appropriate time to begin. Chinese PR Wang noted that the Council's informal discussion on the issue was already underway, and the Council needed to "keep up the momentum" in the coming months. The UK's Jones Parry said that "the show has already started" and needs to continue.

A ticket to nowhere

15. (C) The idea of having the Council select a D/SYG or Chief Operating Officer as part of a "ticket" with a new SYG was rejected. Russian PR Denisov noted that any formal Council action or discussion on the D/SYG would alienate the wider GA membership. The UK's Jones Parry said, while he was extremely unhappy with the "haphazard, non-transparent" process by which the SYG currently selected his Deputy and Under Secretaries-General, that there was no reference in the Charter to a role for the Council in the D/SYG selection. He noted that it was the GA that created the D/SYG position through a resolution (A/RES/52/12B). Wang said the Council should "concentrate on selecting a SYG." De La Sabliere said that he did not want the overall selection process to deviate from the Charter "by a single comma" and he could therefore not support the ticket approach. He did note, however, that he saw "merit" in the idea of a deputy with management authority and a clear delegation of responsibility from the SYG.

GA Role

16. (C) In discussing the role of the General Assembly in the selection process, de La Sabliere emphasized the importance of staying within the bounds of the Charter and suggested that the P-5 find a way to increase the Council's informal contact with the President of the GA. He suggested that formal efforts to provide opportunities for member states to meet potential candidates, as has been suggested by some, would be unwise, but he was prepared to consider informal sessions "off the UN premises". Wang said that the Charter was clear on the primary role of the UNSC, but the Council

would need to handle the issue with "particular care" or risk damaging the broader reform discussion. He suggested that candidates might approach GA members, including through the regional groups, to present their candidacies, and he repeated his call to "maintain the primary role of the Council, while allowing others to feel part of the process."

17. (C) Jones Parry agreed with Wang, noting the need to give member states "a sense of ownership" in the process. The P-5 would need to balance the "reality" of decision-making in the P-5 with the needs of the rest of the Council and the "other 176" member states. Denisov stressed the importance of transparency within the Council but said that he did not think the ideas floated by the Canadian PR for greater GA involvement would be problematic for the Council or infringe on Council prerogatives. He also noted that the role for the President of the GA called for by Resolution 51/241, which was adopted by consensus in the GA, would similarly not interfere with the Council's Charter obligations.

Next Steps

18. (C) PRs agreed that the process of consultation among all fifteen Security Council members should consider under Argentina's Presidency in March. The P-5 would continue to consult and would offer suggestions to PR Mayoral next week, including that he continue private discussions with members on the issue and report informally to the Council before the end of March. P-5 PRs plan to meet again on the issue next month.

19. (C) Ambassador Bolton noted that the P-5 would have to make certain that the process generated a sufficient pool of candidates to ensure that the best possible candidate - from whatever region - was eventually elected. He also noted that the P-5 needs to come to consensus on a candidate before the Council begins voting. All P-5 PRs agreed that an election in the Council marked by repeated vetoes would be bad for the Council and the organization as a whole.

110. (C) There was a brief discussion on regional rotation,

with everyone's positions well established, and brief comments on the subject of "criteria". Chinese PR Wang downplayed the importance of managerial ability, calling it "important at the moment" but not as vital over the long-term. Wang emphasized the need for a candidate of sufficient "international stature."

BOLTON